

DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #107!

The Death Valley Playboys are in fullish PRO STYLE force this week- making with the good, the great and the unexplicable in Japanese Indie wrestling and elsewhere in mat-based esoterica. the Playaz show their tender caring for YOU- the gentle reader- with their grapple-based MEGA FREAKDOM! Strap on your love and gear up for PEEEEEEEEEEEEETTTTEEEEEEE....

PRO WRESTLING FUJIWARA-GUMI COMM TAPE- Korakuen Hall,
5-23-96- (PETE STEIN!)

Normally I'd know better than to actually review a tape like this, but Dean forced me to play my hand way back in #104 by suddenly announcing that we're in a "seediest indy review" contest. Well, this is the equivalent of me going for my finisher inside the first minute. GAME ON, fat boy! Nobody potatoes Stein!

FEGERO vs. TAKASHI OKAMURA- Fujiwara has really POPPED THE TERRITORY here, as upwards of several dozen people are jammed into Korakuen for his show. ;) Fegero is the epitome of Indy Scum as he wears a mask, works on the mat, blows mist at Okamura and hits a plancha all within the first 2 minutes of the match. Find a style and stick with it! Okamura takes control and works Fegero over in the corner, then loses it for some reason and punches out the ref for the DQ at 7:05. I guess Fegero's mongrel-boy gimmick was too much even for him.

APOLLO SUGAWARA vs. HIROSHI HATANAKA- Apollo is one of the last active survivors of the IWE promotion and is about as old and washed-up as you might expect from this description. Hatanaka's worked for WWC as the Great Sensei... sadly he doesn't go all Puerto Rico on Apollo's candy ass, but he does pull out a PHATASS missile dropkick and a wicked spin kick during the course of the match. Finish has a battle of roll-ups, then they duel over an abdominal stretch until Apollo pulls a Grand Cobra Twist out of his ass for the pin at 14:35. OK match that probably would've gone over better if there were more than 17 people in the house.

MIXED MATCH: HIROAKI TSUSHIMA (BOXER) VS. JUN KIKUWADA (WRESTLER)-

Uneventful first round... then everything goes KABLOOEY!!!! in the second as Kikuwada rolls outside, pulls Tsushima out and posts him. The boxing seconds go after Kikuwada, which leads Kikuwada's chums to join the struggle as well. Tsushima hangs out in the ring while Kikuwada steals a kendo stick from one of the seconds and rips into him with it... then everyone rolls back into the ring and the match proceeds as normal. Apparently it's taking place under the auspices of the ISKA- INDY SCUM Kickboxing Association. =P Kikuwada slaps on the most pain-free cross-armbreaker in puroresu history but Tsushima gets saved by the bell. Kikuwada jumps Tsushima in his corner between rounds and they brawl into the bleachers, then back in-ring Kikuwada gives Tsushima a powerbomb onto two chairs. He goes for a rear choke but one of Tsushima's seconds runs in and takes out Kikuwada with boxing gloves WRAPPED IN BARBED-WIRE. See, this is what the Tyson and Hamed fights should've been. =D Kikuwada

chokes Tsushima out with his belt and the ref finally throws the fight out at 3R 2:45. No word if Howard Cosell refused to ever call a wrestling match again after he saw this.

DON ARAKAWA vs. TSUBO GENJIN- Kill me.

MASAO ORIHARA vs. ONRYU- Orihara attacks at the bell and tombstones the Lucha Zombie right away. He heads up top for a moonsault; Onryu rolls out of the way but Orihara lands on his feet and CRUSHES Onryu with a koppo kick. Onryu comes back and sends Orihara to the floor with an elbow smash, then follows up with a crazy flip dive to the floor. Orihara rolls back in and Onryu goes for a missile dropkick, but Orihara moves out of the way and Onryu hits the mat. Orihara lays in some stiff slaps, kicks away at him and hits a super-nasty Tombstone powerbomb. Onryu's zombie buddies are all at ringside and one of them shrieks like a banshee everytime Onryu gets hit which adds even more to the weirdness. Orihara hits a TFPB, adds a lariat and gets a one-foot pin at 2:17.

STREETFIGHT DEATH MATCH: MR. POGO/TORYU vs. DICK SLATER/ MASANOBU KURISU- HEY! It's the tamest streetfight of all time as these four work a straight tag match. Pogo attempts to justify the stip as he and Kurisu head to the floor for some half-assed brawling while former superstar gaijin Slater slaps a spinning toehold on Toryu. Pogo saves his then-disciple and Toryu heads to the floor with Slater while Pogo DDTs Kurisu on a chair (see, it really IS a streetfight!)... then since it's a Fujiwara show, Pogo gets the win with a *dragon sleeper* at 8:22. I guess they RIBBED THE BOYS with this finish, especially since the boxer/wrestler match was more of an actual streetfight.

YOSHIAKI FUJIWARA vs. DICK MURDOCH- This match actually has historical significance, as it's Murder's final Japan bout before his death some weeks later resulted in him becoming a statistic in that National Enquirer article about deaths in wrestling. You know... Dick Murdoch, notorious steroid abuser? Dick is a riot as Fujiwara slaps him around and he sells it like the JD just hit his belly and he's ALL FIRED UP. They work on the mat early with Dick cranking a headlock on him and teasing the brainbuster right away, then sending Fujiwara onto the apron and giving him an AWA elbow tracheotomy. They split a sequence where each guy holds the ropes open for his opponent to re-enter the ring after getting tossed to the floor, then Dick gets the first big reaction of the night by slapping Fujiwara's own wakigatame on him. Following that Dick rolls his sleeves up and the two trade 70s mat holds for the next seven months. Look, it's the headscissors! Fujiwara even jumps back and forth before popping his head out, but not before Dick tries to give him a WEDGIE. Oh my stars and garters. Dick eventually hits the calf branding neckbreaker despite Fujiwara's best attempt to puss out on the landing, but can't put him away. Fujiwara goes for the waki a couple more times, knocks Dick woozy with headbutts and finally slaps the waki on for the submission at 24:37.

This may have been the epitome of all indy shows. OK action, styles all over the map, a couple of big names to pad interest and a total crowd attendance that DDT laughs at.

JWP - 1/7/90

(PHIL RIPPA)

My first taste of real women's wrestling was courtesy the Jumping Bomb Angels. Don't know why I mentioned it but I did. Seven days into the 90s came this. Let's take a look.

Cuty Suzuki vs. Sachiko Koganei: Both girls choose various body parts to work on throughout the match but Koganei annoys me by abandoning the leg by slapping on a Boston Crab. She does win some points back by biting Cuty's leg during a half crab. Cuty eventually grows tired of letting Koganei hang around and busts out various suplexes. Suzuki wins with a victory roll from the top. Brawl after the much accomplishes zip. Nothing to write home about.

Mayumi Ozaki/Dirty Yamato vs. Plum Mariko/Smiley Mami: It was really unusual to watch Ozaki come out without her minions. Aaah, Plum Mariko, what could have been. Yamato looks like a Mini Big Bad Voodoo Mamma. Ozaki, despite being a lot younger, is still surly and tries to kick the smile off of Smiley. The match is really enjoyable when Ozaki and Mariko hook it up. The problem was that they weren't in the match together enough. Yamato does the job to a Mariko German suplex. All four brawl a bit after the match because they can and Ozaki is all pissed because Yamato stinks.

Battle Royal: All the girls on the card are in this. Pins are eliminations. All the girls trick Shinobu Kandori and Devil Masami into locking up then jump then to eliminate both. That soon becomes the story of the match. All the girls jump on top of a pinfall to rid the competition. The good thing is that they weed out the dead weight first. First Masami, then Eagle Sawai is next to follow. The faces and heels break off and it looks like a bad elementary school gym class. In a weird moment, Yamato throws powder (cuz she's dirty you know) in someone's eyes (possible Miss A I don't really remember) and everyone just stops grappling to watch the powder float in the air. I guess they didn't heed that brown acid warning. Moving on, Plum Mariko and Ozaki end up being the last two in the contest. They do a neat little sequence before the goofiness sets in. Mariko hits a sunset flip. Ref gets distracted. Ozaki's heel friends run in, put Ozaki on top, play to the crowd, read the winning lottery numbers, sign some autographs, slip each other the tongue. The ref FINALLY turns around and counts the pinfall. A creepy old man gives Ozaki a trophy and since this is Japan it doesn't get broken.

Rumi Kazama vs. Miyuki Takayama (Wrestler vs. Kickboxer): For a kickboxer, Takayama has really spindly legs. We are talking American Ninja legs here. I felt that Takayama is at a disadvantage here because they do not make Kazama wear boxing gloves. Also I think Takayama is distracted because of Kazama's Betty Rubbleesque outfit. And if you have ever seen Kazama you know this is not a good thing. I give the ladies credit, they are not afraid to plaster one another. Takayama gets the first flurry of offense in landing a kick to the side of Kazama's head before three straight jabs connect. Kazama gets Takayama off her feet and then fails in her attempt to collapse Takayama's ear drum. Towards the end of the first round, Kazama finally realizes her advantage and slaps a crossarm breaker on. Takayama manages to make the ropes as the round ends. The second round is quick.

Kazama absorbs a series of weak kicks, grabs a leg and looks to pop a knee cap. Takayama paws away with her gloves and then submits. An interesting contest to say the least but enjoyable.

Miss A/Miki Handa/Harley Saito vs. Shinobu Kandori/Yuki Ito/Mama Kitamura: It seems that Miss A and Kandori have the real issue in the match and the rest of the girls are along for the ride. This is like the third incarnation I have seen of Saito and I think I am working in reverse chronological order. Ito is willing to get kicked really hard so I don't mind her. Kandori and Miss A waffle each other so they set the tone for the other girls. Saito comes the closest to matching that intensity with her kicks. For awhile, Kitamura does nothing. When she finally does get in the ring, I wish she stayed on the outside. Then just when I want to get completely down on her she takes a jumping tombstone/flying headbutt combo that looked liked it really sucked. Kandori gets upset because she hasn't destroyed Miss A yet so she takes it out on poor little Handa by lawn darting her across the ring with a backdrop driver. All six brawl through the crowd. The camera does a poor job of following the action so we will just move along to the finish. Saito catches Kitamura with a German suplex for the win. Problem was, I don't think it was supposed to be the finish. Kandori and Ito were on their way in for the save but were late. The ref didn't hold up his count and then signaled for the bell. All 6 girls stare at him for a few seconds before they realize that the match is over. Weird.

Eagle Sawai vs. Devil Masami: Since I am being punished for something, I have to watch Sawai and Masami AGAIN. Ooohhhhhh, THIS IS GONNA SUCK. I'm completely baffled by the fact that Sawai is nowhere near the heifer she is today. She was still chunky but at least she didn't have smaller wrestlers stuck in her gravitational pull. Masami still looks like she is retaining water but to her credit is only about 186 here. I will admit that the match wasn't as mind-numbingly bad as I thought it was going to be. Still the fast forward was used liberally. Masami no sells a bunch of stuff and neither lady is too eager to get off the mat so things are slow to say the least. Masami breaks out a surfboard which I didn't even realize was in her MOVE SET. Some tiny girl I didn't recognize jumps in the ring and breaks up the submission. Masami bullies her around while Sawai grabs a chair and taps Masami with it. The two move to the floor and the tape cuts out. Hey Loreface left me hanging. Hmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.... Actually I think it was a blessing.

~+~

&*~&*~&*~&*~&*~&*~& BATTLARTS BATTLESTATION on Samurai!TV- 7/4/1999.
(DEAN RASMUSSEN)

I was talking to Schneider the other day- right after getting this tape from him- and he was watching this weeks decent episode of WCW Thunder while I was watching the Malenkos wrestle Ikeda and Ishikawa and I noted to him that When BattlARTS Exists In My Wrestling World, I REALIZE That Most Wrestling REALLY SUCKS IN COMPARISON. WCW: suck. WWF: suck. ECW: suck. AAA: suck. NEW JAPAN: suck. All Japan: suck. TORYUMON: mostly suck. MICHINOKU PRO: mostly suck. RINGS: suck. BIG JAPAN: suck. ALL JAPAN WOMEN: suck. JWP: suck. Pretty much only EMLL and GAEA holds its own consistently and

I'm thinking ARSION would but I don't get enough of it. BattlARTS is the best wrestling on the face of the earth and JIMINY! does it fucking rule.

Rasta the VoodooMan vs Takashi Hijakata: Stir it up, little darlin. This is a DIFFERENT faux-Rastafarian than the comically inept Global version. This particular Rasta forgets to lively up himself and so the match really passes the Koochie on the left hand side and what have you as this is basically Hijakata getting squashed by the supposed spleef-smoking Marcus Garvey-ite. I'm hoping that I and I send him to Babylon and off my TV forever. LEGALIZE IT! (Actually, it wasn't enough for me to figure out if he legitimately sucked, but I never get to make all these boss Reggae jokes- so humor me.)

Minoru Tanaka vs Katsumi Usuda: This was pretty fricking great. Usuda is pretty limited to sheer ass-kicking and matwork in his scope of offense and thus he isn't the best example of a BattlARTS wrestler despite his formidable list of cool as hell matches- all of which hinge on Usuda being in the ring with someone who can A.) readily be kicked right in the face, and B.) make sense of the match and put his kicking and punching in the right places in-between all the matwork and make it all fun, and cool, and great like good BattlARTS is. Usuda is kinda like a thinner, more consistent Dynamite Kansai. The thing that makes ALL these BattlARTS wrestlers- as a whole- better than any other wrestlers in Japan is that all of them SELL. I've never seen any of them fall into the HORRENDOUS Puroresu trend of NJ heavyweight no-selling- which has even infected GAEA to a point. With those bases covered, the irritation factor is almost totally neutralized. Minoru Tanaka is Hikari Fukuoka to everybody else's Commander Boirshoi in BattlARTS- in that he takes the good workers in BattlARTS and makes them look great and he takes Usuda and makes him look versatile. Tanaka takes it to the mat like a MAN and they pretzelize each for a while until Usuda gets to kicking the fudge out of Tanaka. Tanaka does the MOTHERFUCKING SWANK Enzuguiri MORTAL where he misses an enzuguiri so he can roll into a kneebar- in what is number 68 on Tanaka's hit parade of cool ass moves. The ending is the diminishingly cool in comparison Flippy Jumpy Keylock Into a Cross Armbreaker as Minoru starts getting wins in the big leagues with this one over Usuda.

Yuki Ishikawa/ Mohammed Yone vs Diasuke Ikeda/ Ikuto Hidaka: I don't know if you- the gentle reader- actually WATCH BattlARTS or if you just enjoy living vicariously through we who rave about it- either way, remember how AMAZINGLY stiff that Ikeda vs Ishikawa Go Broadway Match was? HEY! Guess what! THIS IS EVEN STIFFER! Add to the fact that Ikeda and Ishikawa make buckets of Potato soup, one can also add in the fact that Hidaka is the fastest rising star in Puroresu and Yone has been beaten into my heart and you've got the makings for another in a long line of beautiful BattlARTS matches. The basis of the match seems to be that they are trying to find the absolute most face-crushing methods of breaking up submissions. I'm guessing that Ikeda saved Ishikawa's life in Nam and then introduced Ishikawa to his future wife because he lets Ikeda punch him right in the face REALLY hard in the funnest break-up of a Half-crab in the history of people punching each other right in the face. This gets even better because Yone opts to have ISSUES! with Ikeda THUS Yone kicks Ikeda really hard and Ikeda leans into them like a psycho and achieves the hellish look that makes all of his matches such fabulously harrowing experiences. This fucking ruled.

Minoru Tanaka vs Hidaka: This was an exercise in neato freaked-out Lucha-via-Shootstyle roll-ups and- while nobody is gonna top Minoru Tanaka in grace and beauty- Hidaka gives him a run at the creativity and youthful exuberance departments. Hidaka doesn't look as credible as Minoru in the kicking and punching department- simply because Hidaka is scrawny and hasn't been on the giving and receiving ends with Ikeda, Ishikawa, Usuda, Otsuka and the boys enough. Hidaka does use lots of high-flying to counteract Minoru's superior STRIKING! and Minoru sells it like he's in BattlARTS or something. Fifteen freaky roll-ups into submissions later and we have another Tanaka victory from the Keylock-Roll-Into-A-Crossarmbreaker jumpy deal and you have a Good Little Match on your hands.

Ishikawa vs Usuda: Ishikawa takes it to the mat and Usuda responds with a nifty showing of Fujiwararific counters. They abandon the whole matwork area for a while because you can really kick Ishikawa really hard in the face and he'll take it like a man- and Usuda gets to take a batch of straight rights to the face whether he wants to take them like a man or not- so this part is about as stiff as anything you'll see. For a while they kinda beat the hell out of each other to set up assorted submissions and it stays pretty even until Usuda decides to dole out a beating so hellish that only someone as Tough As Frickin Nails like Ishikawa could take- as Usuda crushes him with kicks and knees flush to the face and then whips out the big Urican- all of which adds to an eight count each. After having his skull caved in for the fifteenth time by Usuda, Ishikawa lucks into a Rings of Saturn Into A Cross-Armbreaker and the ass stomping finally ends. BattlARTS really fucking rules.

Diasuke Ikeda/Takeshi Ono vs Masaaki Orihara/ Mohammed Yone: Orihara goes all New Wave with the Missing Persons circa SPRING SESSION M striped eye make-up and his Mohawk is more the Jean Bouvoir level- as opposed to the Waddy-From-The-Exploited level Mohawk he was sporting prior to this. Ono has that Teddy Boy look with his formative pompadour to the point that he looks like he should be backing Morrissey during the Suedehead tour. Yone is still more stylish than both with the Vapors-level spiky bleach job and the old school Adidas sweatpants. The match itself was quite a mixed bag- as Orihara and Ono seemed to go for so many Wrestling Comedy Jokes that I thought I was watching a Popeye cartoon or something. Yone and Ikeda continue to have ISSUES! but they never actually get to a point where they beat the living the hell out of each other- and IF ANYONE is gonna take and receive a man-sized beating, these two would deliver and receive it. There were loads of good stuff though- as Ono finally figures out how to be a highflyer and gets a Somersault Senton right and it looks all neato. Orihara doesn't suck completely like he is wont to do. Still, it's quite a forgettable Main Event for an otherwise funtabulous Battlestation.

~#~

\$\$\$%\$%\$%\$%\$%\$%\$%\$%\$ New Japan TV : Top of the Super J VII- 5/99
(REV RAY DUFFY)

-The show opens with Chono and Onita announcing an alliance.

-Baiser's debut single is coming out soon. I point this out because the promo is basically a zoom on on some chicks boobs bouncing up and down. I didn't know Vince and Ed directed commercials in Japan.

Masao Orihara (sporting Luna Vachon-esque blond extensions) v. Shijiro Ohtani : Orihara strikes first with a baseball slide and a quebrada off the post before Ohtani gets his jacket off. Orihara does some brawling, when Ohtani tries to hit him with a German Suplex, Orihara nuts him and flips him off like a Japanese indy scum Steve Austin. Orihara runs the ropes but eats a jumping back kick. Unlike his usual tag team partner Kanemoto, Ohtani at least goes back to selling the previous low blow. Orihara goes for a German and gets nugged by Ohtani in revenge. Ohtani gets in his boot scrape spots, which Orihara returns the favor. Ohtani fights back and spends a good 10 to 20 seconds of rubbing his forearm across the cheek/nose of Orihara in a spot that had to suck. Orihara takes it out to the floor and chairs Shinjiro a few times, then dumps a bottle of water on him which only seems to get Ohtani really cheesed. Orihara gets control and hits the ode to the Sandman show them to the 4 sides of the arena piledriver. Orihara gets a near fall by dodging a spring drop kick and hitting his a la majstral. Orihara scores another near fall following a spider German/moonsault combo. Orihara eats knees when he goes for another moonsault. Ohtani capitalizes with a spring drop kick and a Lyger bomb which get him a two. One of these two moves busts Orihara's nose. Ohtani with the Dragon Suplex for the win. This match was pretty enjoyable. Orihara's not known for his sterling performances, but this one was pretty good. Ohtani held him to a pretty good brawl.

Takada does a commercial for a drink during the commercials run.

Jushin Thunder Lyger v. Gramps Hamada : The battle of the world's largest minis is joined in progress, the first few minutes are all Hamada and Lyger taking it to the mat, exchanging holds with each coming up with a counter to the other's offense. After about 5 minutes of this, Lyger loses his cool and puts the boots to Hamada after a rope break leading to them yelling at each other and not going so scientifically with Hamada dropping him with a forearm. Lyger hits a tilt-a-whirl slam, Lyger answers with a tilt-a-whirl back breaker. Hamada gets backdropped to the floor and Lyger hits a plancha off the post. He whips Hamada into the rails and then nails him with the running shotay. A Lyger fisherman buster earns him a 2, as does a SUPAFISHAMANBUSTA! Hamada counters a Lyger attack with a Rana but only gets a one. Lyger continues his offense until he goes up top and Hamada catches him and hits a Diamond Cutter from the top rope. Both men are down and neither can capitalize. They do a quick set of counters ending with Lyger hitting a shotay for a near fall, followed by a running Lygerbomb for another 2. Lyger goes for the corner Shotay but misses, Hamada hits the swing DDT but again, it's too stunned to follow for a pin. He recovers and puts Lyger on the top rope and kills him dead with a DDT from the top rope. This was cool. I dug the mat exchange and this was void of Lyger doing his Hogan/Warrior total no sell act that he's been wanting to do in the past few months.

Shiro Koshinaka/Kensuke Sasaki v. NWO Sting/Masahiro Chono: Chono and Sting attack before the bell and throw Sasaki and Kosh to the floor where they brawl with them for a few. Sting works over Koshinaka for a few until Koshinaka ass attacks him and tags to Sasaki. Sasaki gets on the attack, but Chono runs in and attacks him to cut off his momentum, both times, Sasaki overpowers them and comes back. Koshinaka calls in Chono, Chono's way over with the crowd. We get in a round of Ass, Paper, Kenka Kick which Chono wins. Basic story of

the matches is that Chono and Sting can't overcome Sasaki despite their double team attempts... especially after a few backfire. Sasaki wins this one pretty quick, about 7 minutes with two lariats. You're not missing much.

Tenryu/Fujinami v. Mutoh/Tenzan : Mutoh controls on Tenryu, jacking his opponents two signature submission holds, the Dragon Sleeper and the WAR Special. Apparently New Japan has picked up a bunch of the old wise ass W*ING fans because as soon as Tenzan is tagged in, the fans hiss with anticipation of the mongolian chop. Tenzan gets in trouble, but with Mutoh's help, is able to escape a belly to back superplex and turn it into a calf branding. Mutoh's all goofy as he does the Tenzan chop and then the Mogolian chop that draws a hug pop. They go back and forth and Tenryu tattoos him with some chops. Tenzan works with Fujinami it sounds like there's a gas leak in the building from the fans. The action is back and forth with Mutoh and Tenzan working over each other as Tenzan dominates Fujinami when they're in the ring. Tenzan gets two near falls on Fujinami following a diving head butt until he runs into Fujinami's sleeper into the dragon sleeper. Mutoh comes in and catches Fujinami in a dragon screw as well as Mutoh. We get a spot where both Mutoh and Fujinami slap the figure four on their opponents. It ens when Tenryu catches Mutoh in the WAR Special and Fujinami puts away Tenzan with the figure four. Pretty ok. What was showed was pretty fun, if only for the wise ass fans and Mutoh being in a goofy mood.

~+~

!@!@!@!@!@!@!@!@!@ Kageki Pro Wrestling -10/25/98
(PHIL SCHNEIDER)

We here at the Death Valley Driver love Japanese Indy wrestling. If we get a tape that has a 17 star, psychology- laden Kenta Kobashi v. Mistuhara Misawa classic, and an IWA card with Kamakazi and Great Takeru, we are watching the IWA. Thus I was pretty juiced to look upon the newest Jeff Lynch list and see offerings from Kageki Pro, a league I haven't even heard of. The actual output was mediocre, but it was plenty indy for my tastes.

Mumyou v. Suicide Johnny: I got pretty excited for this match, I mean when you see someone with a name like Suicide Johnny on a match list for a Japanese Indy card, you get all moist-expecting some scrawny seedy guy with a bad mask landing wrong on his shoulder while attempting ill-advised highspots. Imagine my dismay when Suicide Johnny turns out to be a Japanese Cueball Carmichael with a bad mask and 20 more pounds. Mumyou looked sort of agile, and had a cool mask, but he couldn't do anything with "Suicide" who refused to take even the most rudimentary bumps, this match included the worst Van Damniator I have ever seen with "Suicide" not letting chair come with in six inches of his head. This match sucked a dick.

Basara v. Daiyu Kawauchi: Basara has a really great mask, it is all black with white whiskers sticking out like a moustache and goatee, it really rules, I can't say enough good things about the mask. That mask is the best thing about Basara and this match. Basara kind of wrestles like Ole Anderson with a lot of elbows, and

armbars, at one point even doing a stump puller. Kawauchi does a bunch of dropkicks. Ehh not bad, not good, not really mediocre, sort of nebulous.

Hiroyoshi Kotoshio v. Tadahiro Fujisaki: Kotoshio is sort of a lumpy guy, he may be a distaff WAR Heavyweight. Fujisaki appears to have stolen the white hot Avatar gimmick from Al Snow as he came to the ring with a ninja mask but removed it. This match started with some nicely tricked out mat wrestling from Fujisaki, and he looked a lot like fellow Kageki kingpin Masakazu Fukada. Once they quit the mat wrestling and standing exchanges, the match kind of went to hell, as Kotoshio couldn't really do anything. Fujisaki rocks though, and he needs to be put on the lookout list.

Masaaki Mochizuki / Keiichi Kawano v. Masakazu Fukuda / Cosmic Soldier:

Fukada is the hidden great wrestler in Japan, he is a Social Progress boy, and he showed up as a wild card in the 1998 NJ Super Juniors tourney and rocked the house. He is damn hard to get tape on, and was one of the main reasons I bought this tape. Cosmic Soldier is a skinny highspotster with a blue mask. Long time DVDVR readers know how we as a collective feel about Maasaki Mochizuki, Keiichi Kawano is a Buko Dojo compatriot of Mochizuki and is quite the Stevie Richards to Mochizuki's Shawn Michaels. The match itself was pretty hit and miss. There were some really great sections with Masaaki and Masakazu hitting the mat like mofos, and Soldier did some highspottin', but Kawano is ass, and Soldier is not that great in between highspots. Highlights include the sweet Shiryu roll from the Cosmic one, Mochizuki kicking people in the face, and Fukada hitting a choice twisting uranage.

Shinobi / Azteca v. Makoto Saito/Guerrero Diablo: Makoto Saito is what Japanese Indy wrestling is all about, he can toss the suplex, drop a nasty kick to the face, do a little highflying, take a bump or two, and he looks like a barker for Japanese massage parlors. Saito would probably be a big star in BattlArts if he didn't reek with the stench of societies gutter. I am not talking about the faux sleaze of Scott Hall here, Saito has seen the look in the eyes of a 15 year old prostitute as the horse hits her system hard, he has driven one of his stiff kicks into the face of a mid-level salary worker who has had too much Sapporo and tried to grope the stripper doing the snake dance- Saito is the darkness, JACK. I digress, this match was a pretty decent mid-range lucha match. Guerrero Diablo was quite the solid mid-range rudo, Shinobi was all quick, Azteca (who is apparently the Ace of the promotion), was right there, while Saito delivered the quasi-shootstyle edge, which differentiated this from you average EMLL undercard bout. This was solid and pretty long, it fell apart a couple of times, but it had the star, and a highspot train, and was an enjoyable 15 minutes of pro-wrestling.

[illegible]

SINGLES GOING STEADY!

%%%%%%%%%%%%%%
 %

BattlARTS- 7/22/99 Masami Soronaka Memorial Show- DON ARAKAWA vs. TSUBO GENJIN- (DEAN RASMUSSEN): No WAY!! Twice in one DVDVR on two different shows! SWEET GOD! Kill me.

W*ING- Survival Requiem Bunkhouse Death Match: GEDO/ JADO/ HIDO vs. SHOJI NAKAMAKI/ NOBUTAKA ARAYA/ MASAYOSHI MOTEGI- 2/11/94 Korakuen Hall-(PETE STEIN!) : Essentially, this is the original W*ING's death rattle as Gedo and Jado are jumping to WAR following this show. First half of the match is a crazy brawl as Motegi and Nakamaki juice (in other news, smoking is bad for you) and everyone brawls all over Korakuen. There's a neat twist in that something like 4 refs are there to count pins as everyone splits up, and the crowd is going nucking futs for Jado and Gedo even as Jado destroys Nakamaki and Araya with the bell-ringer. Jado clamps a sleeper on Araya in mid-ring and Nakamaki gets booed out of the building for making the save. Out of nowhere both teams get onto the apron, and just like that we've got a regular six- man tag. Team W*ING isolates Hido and Motegi suplexes the crap out of him for several minutes. Gedo soon tags in and it's Motegi's turn to get abused as Jado crushes him with Jerry Lynn's henkei piledriver. The lame ducks work him over for several minutes until he dropkicks Jado and Gedo at the same time and tags in Nakamaki. The brawl picks back up as Nakamaki and Motegi brawl with Gedo and Hido on the floor while Jado works on Araya in-ring. Araya slams him and goes for his German Air Show Moonsault but Jado gives him an Electric Chair that deposits him directly on his head. He slaps a Texas Clover Hold on Araya but Nakamaki saves to more solar heel heat. From this point on it's a Cavalcade of Near-Falls! Motegi hits a Triple German suplex on Hido but Jado saves. They go for a Superbomb on Motegi but Araya intervenes and Motegi hits an NLS on Jado for 2. Gedo and Jado hit an assisted powerbomb on Nakamaki, who kicks out at 2.999. Hido hits a spinkick on Nakamaki, Jado gives him a nodowa and Gedo splashes him off the top but Motegi saves. He tosses Gedo to the floor and hits a wild tope while Jado chokes out Nakamaki with a chair and Hido deals with Araya, hitting him with every move in his arsenal to no avail. Jado destroys Nakamaki with chairshot after chairshot but Nakamaki has his Kevlar(tm) scar tissue for protection! Araya comea back with a pair of powerbombs and hits the moonsault for the pin at 26:10. Great match with non-stop action, tons of emotion and the typically rabid SRO W*ING crowd. Everyone embraces postmatch and by all rights this should've been the final W*ING show, but for some strange reason Kendo Nagasaki came out from the crowd and chaired Team W*ING, leading to an anticlimactic show four days later in front of a crowd that rivaled the Fujiwara show for sparseness.

BattlARTS- 7/22/99 Masami Soronaka Memorial Show- Joe Malenko/Carl Malenko vs Diasuke Ikeda/ Yuki Ishikawa- (DEAN RASMUSSEN): Joe Malenko is SOOOOOOOOOOOO cool! He's old, pudgy and will take it to the mat like a MOTHERFUCKER and does so in this match. The story of the match is real meta in a good way (as opposed to in a US wrestling way) in that Joe is a billion years old so he can't carry much of the body of the match, so the burden of doing most of the wrestling is on the shoulders of the VASTLY improved Carl (Greco) Malenko. The fact that the other side is Ikeda and Ishikawa guarantees that this match will rule as much as you thought it would. Joe Malenko and Ishikawa take it to the mat and Malenko fearlessly whips out the coolest Carney submissions, so much so that Volk Han was breaking pencil leads taking

notes. Carl Malenko tags in after Joe blows up and continues with the freaky super-Carny submission matwork but is more attuned to the strike-artific style of Ikeda and Ishikawa so the match works perfectly as the Joe Malenko section is short and a burst of offbeat neatness and then it goes 100% BattleARTS when Carl tags in- as Carl peppers Ikeda with kicks before the submission attempt, whereas Joe is all Greco-Roman and shit. Greco does an extended HEAT SEGMENT! if it were the US- as he gets his ass beaten into the ground by Ikeda and Ishikawa- with Joe making some REAL hurty saves and Greco making some supernifty counters to save himself with desperation submission attempts. Greco is weird because putting these two guys in a tagteam you'd think Greco was actually trained by the Malenkos- though he was actually trained primarily by Bart Duce (according to Meltzer). I'm thinking that Greco just needed a Pro Style focus to direct him in the right direction and the style of the Malenkos is a perfect fit. And he does it better than those who were trained by the Malenkos- including the Malenko-trained Yuki Ishikawa. Y'all prolly never watched him before- but the only time Greco wasn't the most boring Pro Wrestler ever was when he and Viktor Kreuger were partners in the tag tourney last year. Now he is pumping out memorable matches hand over fist. The coolness of his freak-out elaborate WAR special is worth the price of admission. Joe ROCKS! THIS RULED!

WWF- Bret Hart / Owen Hart v. Scott Steiner / Rick Steiner-9/93- (PHIL SCHNEIDER) : This match was a Coliseum Video Exclusive and was one of the hidden great matches of the early 1990's. All four guys were hitting on all cylinders, and you could tell that they were really trying to put out a great match. The match started with Bret and Scott doing a great series of amateur takedowns and reversals. They tag out, and Owen and Rick do the same, with Owen showing amazing speed. Scott and Owen were the stars of this match, with Owen hitting a bunch of suplexes, including a beautiful Northern Lights Suplex and a great Bridged German Suplex. This match was before Scott Steiner decided to volunteer for the U.S. Government sponsored HGH testing program and he still had mobility. He bumps like a freak in this match, getting suplexed to the floor, and slingshotted to the floor. He also does a tope rope axehandle to the floor which I have never seen him do. His offense in the match was very New Japan as he hits a Dragon Suplex, Tiger Driver and a Steiner Square Driver which looks like it broke Owen's neck. Bret kicks in with his usual greatness, along with a Psicosisesque ringpost bump which set up a bunch of arm submissions. The psychology in this match was rock solid, Scott's bump to the floor, set up some work on his back (including a boss diving kneedrop by Owen.) The match ended with a double countout, but both teams got on the mike to challenge the other, and they brawled for a few minutes, before shaking hands and hugging. I am pretty sure this is the only time the two teams wrestled, which is a shame, because a feud would have been spectacular. The commentary on this match was really great too, as Stan Lane and the late great Gorilla Monsoon do a credible job of getting this over as an athletic contest, talking about pressure points, and the effectiveness of the side headlock, pointing out strategy flaws, and marking out at the right moments. Gorilla was a hell of a lot more than just a straight man for Heenan, and his kind of commentary just isn't done anymore.

NEW JAPAN- Bam Bam Bigelow/Larry Cameron vs. Ricki Chosu/Shinya Hashimoto-(phil rippa!): This is another of those matches Phil stumbled across going through the tapes Dean is too lazy to watch. In all of my years of wrestling watching, this is the very first time I have ever seen

Cameron. I remember the Apter mags moistening their panties over him back in the day. He developed this Steve Disalvoian level of following on the Net and now here he is on my TV screen. If this match is any indication of how he wrestled his entire career, I can safely say he stunk. Maybe it was just because this was one of his final matches. I don't know. (He seemed a little unsettled in the ring). He's offense was quite Headbutt-erific. Choshu doesn't do much except throw a bunch of lariats so the bulk of this matches falls on the shoulders of Hashimoto and Bigelow which is fine by me. Hashimoto is WAY smaller than he is now and it is really weird watching him lay in the kicks. I guess it is a whole matter of perception since watching skinny Hash deliver the kicks doesn't look as nasty. Still he rightly kicks Cameron in his pretty boy face. Bigelow bumps a bunch in an attempt to save the match but his partner drags him down. Cameron rightfully does the job and I think I was better off not ever watching him wrestle.

~%~

#####

THIS WEEKS SOLID GOLD SPOTLIGHT DANCE IS..... AKIRA HOKUTO!

AA

Mid-Summer Typhoon 1992 Fuji TV Tag Tournament Final: AKIRA HOKUTO/

TOSHIYO YAMADA vs. AJA KONG/BULL NAKANO 8-15-92 Korakuen Hall- (Pete Stein): I'm calling dibs on the Tokyo-via-Memphis Southern redneck Hokuto. The storyline for this match is that life-long enemies Bull and Aja were put together as a team for the first time and seeded directly through to the finals while heel Hokuto somehow got stuck with Yamada for a partner as opposed to one of her LCO teammates Mita or Shimoda. Early part of the match consists of Bull and Aja systematically destroying Yamada and especially Hokuto as Aja ties her up in the ropes so Bull can hit her with a few of her shotgun lariats. Someone in LCO finally hands her a kendo stick and she goes off on Aja, but Yamada suddenly gets all sappy and prevents her own partner from using it on them. While they fight over the stick Aja knocks them both to the floor and hits a PLANCHA, then holds them so Bull can hit a tope backinaday before her knees turned to gefilte fish. Bull works over Yamada with her nunchakus while Aja piledrives Hokuto on a table then hits the Aja Bomb in-ring, but can't put her away. She hits her elbow off the top but Yamada saves her. Mita tries to toss Hokuto THE STICK again but Yamada intercepts it and breaks it in two, which allows Aja to sneak up and brain both of them with her can. Hokuto comes back with a backdrop on Bull and goes to tag out but Yamada blows her off. Hokuto hits the Northern Lights Bomb on Bull but Aja toasts her with another can for the save. Yamada finally comes in and hits Bull with a series of brain kicks and a diving shoulderblock off the top, but Bull kicks out. Hokuto hits a missile dropkick on Bull and holds her for Yamada's brain kick off the top... do I really have to say who eats that kick this time? Aja gets the hot tag and slams Hokuto to set up Bull's guillotine off the top but Yamada breaks up the pin. Now Bull slams Hokuto and Aja OBLITERATES Hokuto with a top-rope guillotine of her own for the pin, then we get the all-time visual of Aja and Bull celebrating in each other's arms like two immense, face-painted schoolgirls who just won the Yomiuri Shimbun Spelling Bee. Postmatch Yamada kicks Hokuto for dropping the fall, so Hokuto goes postal on her with THE STICK and they brawl to the back. Bull then gets on the house mic and says something to the effect of "Isn't it a shame they don't get along like we do?" that sends the whole crowd into hysterics. Just a great storyline match, like Rock & Sock with 1 zillion times the workrate. Insanely enough Yamada

Rumi Kazama vs Akira Hokuto (hair vs hair match)- LLPW 11/93- This is when Hokuto was pretty much the best wrestler in the entire world and she shows you why in this match. Rumi Kazama is quite the journeyman wrestler- a real Tough Tom in the WCW Saturday Night of Joshi Puroresu- in that she is mechanically fine and an okay worker, but she's not gonna produce any matches that your gonna kill to get a hold of. Here Hokuto makes the finish never seem like it's the obvious conclusion that it is- as she works a hurt knee to even things up and make it interesting. This is the reason why Hokuto will go down in the annals of wrestling history as a distaff, dangerous version of Ric Flair- every match has a story that is compelling and each match is geared around making the opponent look strong while losing to the obvious winner. Here, Hokuto hits a backbreaker and sells her own knee as being crushed and Rumi starts in on the knee for the New Japan-esque simplicity of the match that works as well as the best Hashimoto Miracle match. It starts off well- after the story is set up as Akira REALLY stretches the living hell out of Kazama with two of the hurtiest Sharpshooters you'll see. After that, she goes all dangerous as she hits a Dangerous Backdrop that Kazama takes like a stud. Hokuto takes a fat ass bump off the top rope as Kazama counters her top rope Dropkick attempt before it starts and from there Kazama goes to work on the leg, with Hokuto bumping like a freak to get over the state of destruction of the knee and put the shadow of a doubt in the mind of the audience- "Heck! It's an LLPW show! YA never know!" "Kazama owns the company, maybe she Dusty'd herself over Hokuto! IT COULD HAPPEN! WOW!" After Hokuto leans into a pudgy senton to make it look like it legit sucked, she gets into the heckish ending by dodging Kazama's second top rope attempt. Hokuto shows Kazama the danger by starting off with her weird-assed Inverted (As In Backwards) Brainbuster which Kazama counters her last offensive flurry with a Tiger and the Senton bit but she is murdered by a normal Brainbuster followed by a Jumping Powerbomb on the floor for an 18 count. After another Powerbomb and a sleeper attempt, Hokuto puts her away with a second sleeper hold and lets the haircut begin! Rumi actually needed her comical Farrah Fawcett 1976 hairstyle redone so she was probably pushing hard for any way to get her head shaved. Plus it allows her to do the cool thing of cutting her own hair in total Joshi martyr fashion. Hokuto is suitably stormy as the total bitch the whole time from introduction to not releasing the sleeper. She is a heat machine and has always been a TRUE Feminist Role Model- marrying and divorcing at will, telling AJW to go fuck themselves when they tried to retire her, having a triumphant return to form when she came to GAIA- having memorable and skullcrushing matches with KAORU, having a baby and doing the unthinkable in Japan of getting back in the ring. She's the virtual Sarah Bernhardt of Joshi Puroresu and I have to admire her courage, her will and her ability and I'm just glad she is wrestling again.

[illegible]

NEXT WEEK: BIG JAPAN with HONMA vs YAMAKAWA! GAEA! TORYUMON! A WRESTLER OF THE WEEEEK!!!!

THE DEATH VALLEY PLAYBOYS.

six fists in the face of wrestling

Take me off and don't bring me back - scratch your name in my Cadillac cuz Baby! Baby! you
can do no wrong.....

- Carl Perkins